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January 11, 2021

Dr. Debra Savage, Chairwoman
Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board
525 W. Jefferson St., Second Floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Chairwoman Savage and Review Board members,

I am writing in opposition to Project 20-042, Mercy Care Center.

I have read the application from Trinity Health, and it seems like this project is designed such that it will not fall under the regulation of the Illinois Hospital Legislative Act and the HFSRB. So it may be a moot point to object to the project, since it does not appear to require a license. However, by designing the Mercy Care Center such that it is not subject to regulation, it also fails to provide most of the health care services that will be lost with the closing of Mercy Hospital. Mercy Hospital provides comprehensive inpatient, outpatient, and emergency services, totaling almost half a million patient contacts per year. The proposed outpatient center is being designed to provide 12,000 urgent care visits and 35,000 diagnostic imaging visits - 10% of the patient volume with no inpatient care, no emergency care, and no primary care or specialist care.

The Mercy Care Center will displace an existing outpatient clinic at the proposed location that provides primary and specialist care to families and seniors in the Bronzeville neighborhood. The application did not specify the number of visits currently provided by the existing clinic or whether those services are being relocated. The community should not have to lose access to primary and specialist care, and long-term relationships with physicians and other health care providers, in order to gain an urgent care center.

As a standalone urgent care and diagnostic imaging center, it is hard to see how the Mercy Care Center will attract patients, since it appears to have no affiliated source of patient referrals and no relationship with a hospital or health network that will provide care to patients after diagnosis.

By continuing to implement its plan to shut down of Mercy Hospital, Trinity Health is showing that it does not have the health and well-being of the community as a concern. It has broken the bond of trust that is essential to the relationship between patients and care providers. Trinity Health has not consulted with the community on its needs or taken into account actual usage of critical services for either the hospital closure or the establishment of its new outpatient center. They are not fit to offer health care services to the Near South Side.

Sincerely,

Christine Pao
"Save Mercy Hospital" Committee, St. James Catholic Church